



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE GROUP IDEA VERSUS THE GRADE IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

---

LUCY E. BROWNING

Chicago

---

"If the school were to be viewed in a strictly scholastic sense, its function might be briefly stated as the cultivation of thought and expression. If, on the other hand, an ethical point of view is to be taken, then the school's function might be summarized as the promotion of the best social life." It will readily be seen that these two views supplement each other and as a working plan may be viewed as one. The modern school is not only expected to give the pupil a knowledge of the three R's, but also to teach morality, train character, and make good citizens.

Present-day psychology considers that education is a process of growth; that, as Froebel said, the full and complete development of each stage is necessary for the development of succeeding stages. The child is a part of society. He is not fitting himself to be a member, he *is* a member, of society. The home and the school must not be separated. It is for the school to make its curriculum fit the child. The problem is not to give the child such material as he will need when he is grown, but what he needs now.

The school must recognize the great fundamental instincts and turn them in the right direction. The hunting and shelter instincts develop in the child as they did in the race, and should be turned to account by being used as motives for hand-work, stories, and reading.

In the recapitulation theory there is simultaneous and parallel development. Nowhere is there series or successive development. Our problem is to take the raw feelings and give them opportunities to grow in right directions. Children (and adults) must want the right things.

Growth is by pulses; it is not steady. This is seen in child play. The child becomes completely immersed in one thing and goes on with that until he has found all that he can in it. Then he plays something else in the same way. It seems to me that there might be times in school when an absorbing interest could be carried out in the same way. Mr. Burbank and others have shown that with plants there is a period of adaptation and mutation when new species are easily formed. After that period they cannot be formed. With human beings after the nascent period it is only with difficulty that new acquisitions are made.

It is true that the growing process is going on during the twenty-four hours, and not only while the child is in school. Does the school during a few hours give opportunity and means for the best development of each child? To some of those who have this aim in view the present system of grading seems detrimental. Mr. Jackman says that the children are graded according to age, knowledge, and skill, which he shows to be unnecessary. And still further, he says: "The influence of the grading system upon the pupil is necessarily bad. It retards his progress through the elementary school, and it fosters selfishness. Under the old ideals of education the children must exert themselves to excel each other. Under the new, members of a group must exert themselves to help each other."

Mr. Jackman presents a sociological problem that thinking teachers must face when he says: "The problem of grading and grouping of pupils will be solved when the children are permitted to plan work for themselves that demands co-operation." To achieve an ideal humanity there must be co-operation. "The future belongs to co-operation, or, if it is preferred, to the rivalry in social service. Co-operation means co-working; co-working develops community of feeling, which is sympathy and sympathy is the basis of love." The knowledge of the school must be given a social value. The individual cannot live to himself alone.

The individual, the social unit, must be strong, if the whole is to be strong. It is through his rights that he learns there are duties connected with rights. The group idea carries out the social ideal. Mr. Scott advocates allowing the children some

freedom in forming the groups. The strong and weak intellectually would in this way be brought together and help each other. The children would naturally group themselves according to liking for hand-work or by a natural sympathy. Mr. Search in *An Ideal School* shows how varied are the capabilities in an ordinary grade, and in his school each individual would do what he can and not be hindered by others. Every child should be placed where he is the happiest. Mr. Search gives every consideration to health, which he thinks of first importance in his plan for an ideal school. He does not emphasize the social ideal as does Mr. Henderson in his *Education and the Larger Life*. Perhaps there are in this work some ideas which may be laughed at, but there are many more which are inspiring and suggestive in the search for what is best in educational ideals.

In the School of Education the group idea is carried out especially well in the morning exercises and in the parties which are given to one room by another. There is co-operation, co-working, and sympathy. There is great incentive and help in carrying out all plans of the school in the co-operation and sympathy of the parents, many of whom are frequent visitors. In Pestalozzi-Froebel Haus children from the different grades are gathered together for the study of pictures. This grouping is to stimulate that of the family. The social idea is carried all through the Haus, each grade assisting another in some way.

It is essential for this change in grading that there be not only those who believe it to be wise, but also those who can effect it in the school. Teachers go into the schools to teach children—not reading, writing, and arithmetic. Perhaps more attention given to how to learn rather than how to teach would bring about the desired results. President Hadley thinks that more attention should be given to the mental types of pupils. There is the literary, the scientific, and the administrative type of mind. The teacher should realize that the scientific mind takes up every subject from the standpoint of the scientific investigator; the other types form the administrative and literary point of view. The recognition of these types will enable the teacher to understand and meet the needs of her pupils.

The pupils are to be guided into the life of moral freedom. Should not the one who guides have achieved this freedom? What is there in the good, the uplifting, the right to put into the mind to give it control? By moral freedom is meant complete control by ideas of right. This is an inner, not an outer thing. "Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free."

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- P. W. Search, *An Ideal School*.  
C. H. Henderson, *Education and the Larger Life*.  
W. S. Jackman, "School Grade Fiction," *Educational Review*, Vol. XV.  
W. S. Jackman, "The Year in Review," *The Elementary School Teacher*, June, 1906.  
"Children's Self-Organized Work and the Education of Leadership in the Schools," *Elementary School Teacher*, Vol. VI.  
A. T. Hadley, "Mental Types and Their Recognition in Our School," *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, Vol. CXI, p. 123.  
Ira W. Howerth, "Education and the Social Ideal," *Educational Review*, Vol. XXIV.  
F. Burk, "The Old Education and the New," *Forum*, Vol. XXXIII.  
"The Curriculum of the Elementary School," *Teachers College Record*, Vol. V, No. 2.  
John Dewey, "The Psychology of the Elementary Curriculum," *Elementary School Record*, Vol. I, p. 221.  
W. H. Burnham, "Education from the Genetic Point of View," *Elementary School Teacher*, Vol. VI.  
Josiah Royce, "Self-Consciousness, Social Consciousness, and Nature," *Philosophical Review*, Vols. III and IV.